



**City of Santa Barbara**  
Airport Department

**Memorandum**

**DATE:** May 20, 2009  
**TO:** Airport Commission  
**FROM:** Karen Ramsdell, Airport Director  
**SUBJECT:** Airport Ambassador Program

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**RECOMMENDATION:** That Airport Commission receive a presentation on the Airport Ambassador Program.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Airport Ambassador Program was developed to assist the traveling public by giving directions, providing information about services in the Terminal building and Airport facilities, and answering questions regarding the many attractions of the Santa Barbara area.

Ambassador programs are widely used in Airports all across the country. The ambassadors represent the Airport and provide much needed assistance and reassurance to passengers during travel. Their assistance is valued by the airlines, concessionaires, TSA, and Airport staff. Their friendly good-natured service reduces passenger stress and helps create a warm and positive experience for visitors to Santa Barbara.

The Airport retained hourly employees as ambassadors when the Airline Terminal was disrupted during the ADA remodel of the restroom facilities in 1995, but was discontinued when the project was completed.

Due to the numerous changes taking place during the construction of the new Airline Terminal Improvement project, staff felt that it would be advantageous to reinstitute the program. After consultation with other Airports with highly successful programs and other City departments with volunteer programs, it was decided to attempt to form a volunteer group of Airport Ambassadors.

Advertisements were placed in local papers and flyers distributed in various locations in Goleta and Santa Barbara. Potential ambassadors submitted applications and were

interviewed between December 2008 and February 2009. The first group of 12 ambassadors attended an orientation session in March where they learned about the functions of the Airport, and took a site tour.

The Ambassadors were provided with navy blazers with the Airport insignia on them to make them more readily identifiable. Podiums for the Ambassadors have been located both inside the lobby and outside the Terminal in the former skycap location. The program began the week of April 6, 2009, with the initial group of Ambassadors working three-hour shifts during the peak airline traffic period. The program has been very well received.

Ambassadors have provided the Airport with feedback from the questions and comments they receive, complementing the existing comment card program, and allowing the Airport to get additional information on the wants and needs of the traveling public.

Ambassadors report that they are having fun and have had some interesting experiences. One ambassador met a couple from Connecticut whose son was getting married the same day as her daughter. They lived in a town 15 miles from where she grew up, and the woman is a nurse in the hospital where our Ambassador was born.

The Ambassadors keep staff busy researching the answers to questions asked by passengers. Some of them have become quite knowledgeable about the landscaping surrounding the Terminal building.

At this time, about a third of the possible three-hour shifts are covered, mostly during the afternoon hours. A new recruitment will start in May.